

January 18, 1881.

Prof. Flower, LL.D., F.R.S., President, in the Chair.

The following report on the additions to the Society's Menagerie during the month of December 1880 was read by the Secretary :—

The total number of registered additions to the Society's Menagerie during the month of December 1880 was 104, of which 21 were by birth, 21 by presentation, 53 by purchase, 2 by exchange, and 7 were received on deposit. The total number of departures during the same period, by death and removals, was 129.

The most noticeable additions during the month were :—

1. A young female Red Wolf (*Canis jubatus*) from the Argentine Republic, presented by Mr. W. Petty, of Monte Video, being the second example of this scarce animal we have received.

2. A Pig from Brooker Island, Louisiade archipelago, presented by Lient. De Hoghton, of H.M.S. 'Beagle.'

I can only refer this Pig, which, I think, belongs to a wild species, to *Sus papuensis*, although it does not well agree with Lesson's description and figure of that species.

The following papers were read :—

1. On the Birds collected in Socotra by Prof. I. B. Balfour.
By P. L. SCLATER, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.S., and Dr.
G. HARTLAUB, F.M.Z.S.

[Received December 21, 1880.]

(Plates XV.—XVII.)

The collection of birds which I now exhibit was made by Prof. I. Bayley Balfour and his party (consisting of Alexander Scott, botanical collector, and Lient. Cockburn, of the 6th Regiment, and attendants) between February 11th and March 30th, 1880. Prof. Balfour landed at Gollonsir, at the extreme north-west end of the island; and after exploring the adjacent country to the S. and S.W., marched along the north coast to Hadibu, the capital.

Having established their depôt on the Hadibu plain, about a mile from the town, they spent the time until the 7th March in investigating the magnificent Haggier range of hills shutting in on the south the Hadibu plain.

On March 8th, leaving a Lascar in charge of the depôt at Hadibu, they started upon a trip to the eastern end of the island, going eastward along the northern side, and returning westward by the southern side of the island. During this trip they reached Ras Momé, the extreme eastern headland. The camp at Hadibu was again entered on March 18th.

As yet the party had not seen much of the southern parts of the island; so on March 22nd they left Hadibu on their last excursion. Crossing the Haggier range, they emerged upon the southern shore at Nogad, traversed the coast-line for some distance, and then re-crossed the island, so as to come down upon Kadhab village on the north side. They regained Hadibu on the 27th inst., and left for Aden on March 28th¹.

The collection contains 124 examples in skin, and two in spirit. They are referable to 36 species, belonging to the following nine Orders:—

	Ex.	Sp.		Ex.	Sp.
i. Passeres.....	83	17	vi. Columbæ....	16	2
ii. Picariæ.....	2	1	vii. Gallinæ....	1	1
iii. Accipitres....	3	3	viii. Limicolæ....	11	7
iv. Herodiones..	2	2	ix. Gaviæ.....	4	2
v. Anseres.....	4	1			

Of these, seven of the Passeres appear to be new species.

i. PASSERES.

1. CISTICOLA INCANA, sp. nov. (Plate XV. fig. 1.)

Supra tota pallide et obsolete grisescenti-fusca, immaculata; alis totis dorso concoloribus; pileo vix conspicue rufescente; subtus albida, cinerascenti lavata; loris albidis; subalaribus et subcaudalibus albis; maxilla fusca, mandibula pallida, hujus apice fuscescente; rectricibus intermediis dorso concoloribus, laterallium parte apicali obscuriore, albido bimaculata; pedibus pallidis. Long. tota 4·4, alæ 1·8, caudæ 1·8, tarsi 0·9 (poll. Angl.).

Of this little *Cisticola* there are three adult male specimens, all alike in colour, and two nestlings. The beak is long, very straight, slender and much compressed in the apical portion. Wings short, obtuse, and weak. Feet rather large. This is apparently an undescribed species.

“Found on the higher grassy plains. Note a sharp ‘tit’”.—

I. B. B.

2. DRYMÆCA HÆSITATA, sp. nov.

Supra notæi plumis fuscis, late pallidius marginatis, uropygio subrufescente; subtus pallide fusco-cinerascens immaculata; subalaribus et subcaudalibus sordide isabellinis; cauda gradata, rectricibus fuscis, sub certa luce fasciolatis, ante apicem pallidum late et obscure fusco adumbratis; rostro fuscescente, mandibula pallidior; pedibus carneo-pallidis. Long. tota 4·0, alæ 1·9, caudæ 1·6, tarsi 0·7.

This little *Drymæca* (with ten rectrices), of which there is but one specimen in the collection, is so very like the well-known *D. madagascariensis*, that at first sight we considered it to be identical. But

¹ See the Report of the Socotran Committee in Rep. Brit. Assoc. 1880, p. 212.



J. Smit lith

Hanharl imp

1 CISTICOLA INCANA. 2 CINNYRIS BALFOURI with nest



after a more accurate study we have changed our opinion. The Socotran species is altogether a smaller bird; and the relative dimensions are different, the tail being decidedly longer in *D. hæsitata*. It is also differently coloured, the tips of the rectrices not showing a well-defined large white spot as in *D. madagascariensis*, but only a narrow pale brown apical margin: this is constant. The feet are conspicuously larger in the Madagascar bird.

So much, however, is certain, that *D. hæsitata* comes nearer to the Madagascar species than to any other!

"Met with on the trees in the date-groves; also on the shrubs on the hill-slopes."—*I. B. B.*

3. SAXICOLA ISABELLINA (Cretschm.).

Saxicola isabellina, Heuglin, Orn. N.A. i. p. 344.

One skin (female) of this Chat, a well-known species of Eastern Africa and S.E. Asia.

"In the valley Ferâgih and on the plain of Nogad, south side of the island. Met with perched on the shrubs."—*I. B. B.*

4. SAXICOLA MONTANA, Gould.

Saxicola montana, Gould, B. Asia, pt. xvi. (1876).

Mr. Seebohm tells us that this Chat (of which five males and five females are in the collection) is *S. montana* of Central Asia, and not, as we should have been inclined to name it, *S. deserti*. The most salient point of difference of these two nearly allied species is that in *S. montana* the white on the basal portion of the inner webs of the primaries and secondaries comes up to the shaft of the feather, instead of being confined to the interior margin. *S. montana* breeds in Tibet and Eastern Turkestan, but was obtained by Blanford in Baluchistan in December and March.

"Common on the sands of the plains. Has a curious note, between a croak and a hiss."—*I. B. B.*

5. ANTHUS SORDIDUS, Rüpp.

Anthus sordidus, Heuglin, Orn. N.A. i. p. 326.

Six skins of an *Anthus* in the collection come nearer to this species of Africa and Western Asia than to any other described form. They are, however, rather large in dimensions, and have the bill large. Moreover the plumage of the back is more mottled (especially on the rump) than is usual in *A. sordidus*.

"On all the plains. Very common, and wonderfully tame."—*I. B. B.*

6. MOTACILLA ALBA, Linn.

Motacilla alba, Heuglin, Orn. N.A. i. p. 316.

Four examples, apparently of this species.

"Common on all the perennial streams, where they reach the lower plains."—*I. B. B.*

7. *BUDYTES FLAVUS*, Linn.

Budytes flavus, Heuglin, Orn. N.A. i. p. 320.

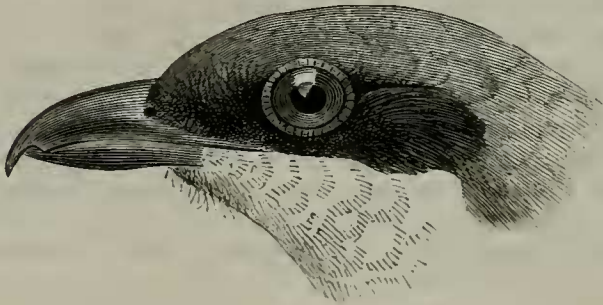
Three skins of this species or of the Indian form *B. viridis*. In one skin there are traces of a yellowish stripe over the eye.

"Only seen on the mud-flats extending inland a short distance from the head of Ghor Gharrieh."—*I. B. B.*

8. *LANIUS UNcinATUS*, sp. nov.

Supra late et pure cinereus; fasciola frontali stricta fasciæque lata a rostro per oculum ducta circumscripte nigris; alarum tectricibus nigris; remigibus tertiariis nigris, limbo apicali albo; remige primo spurio toto nigro, reliquis primariis nigris, in parte basali late et oblique albis, scapis nigris; primarii secundi pogonio externo toto nigro; subalaribus pure albis; rectricibus 4 intermediis nigris, limbo apicali vix conspicuo albo, sequentibus nigris, apicibus latius albis, secunda pro maxima parte et externa tota albis; subtus dilute albido-cinereus; gula et subcaudalibus dilutioribus; rostro fortiter hamato et compresso, nigerrimo; pedibus nigris. Long. tota 8·0, alæ 3·9, caudæ 4·0, tarsi 1·2. Fem. obsoletius tincta et potius fusco-nigricans, ubi mas niger.

Fig. 1.

Head of *Lanius uncinatus*.

Nine examples of this apparently new Shrike are in the series. It comes nearest to *L. fallax*, but is remarkable for its much hooked bill.

"A very solitary bird. Found on those parts of the island where there are trees. None at the east extremity, nor on the Nogad plain on the south side. Females I had some difficulty in getting. The male perches on the top branches of the trees, and there utters a melancholy note. Nom. vulg. 'Tāvifi.'"—*I. B. B.*

9. *ZOSTEROPS HABYSSINICA*, Heuglin.

Zosterops habyssinica, Heuglin, Orn. N.A. i. p. 413.

A pair of this species; obtained the male on the 13th and the female on the 6th of March.





J. Smit lith

Hanhart imp

PASSER INSULARIS

10. *CINNYRIS BALFOURI*, sp. nov. (Plate XV. fig. 2.)

Supra obscure cinerascens, fusco maculata; pileo parum obscuriore, indistinctius maculato; remigibus fuscis, in margine interno nullidioribus; subalaribus albido fuscoque variis; fasciculis pectoralibus late sulphureis; rectricibus obscure fuscis, extima albida, secundæ macula pogonii interni apicali magna alba; mento nigro; regione puerotica infra albo marginata; gutture in fundo nigricante albo squamulato; abdomine sordide albido; subcaudalibus albidis; rostro nigro; pedibus obscuris. Long. tota 5·0, alæ 2·5, caudæ 2·0. Fem. vix diversa.

Five males and two females of this new Sunbird are in the series. The species is remarkable for the entire absence of metallic colours in the plumage. Capt. Shelley, our best authority on this lovely group, writes to us, after examining the skins:—"The birds from Socotra are true Sunbirds, belonging to the genus *Cinnyris*. Presuming that they are in full plumage, I should refer them to my *Cyano-mitra* or Olive Group (Monogr. Sunbirds, p. xxix), and place this species in my key directly after *C. obscura*, and in the same section 'a. No portion of the plumage metallic. Pectoral tufts yellow,' p. xxix. It is a very distinct species; and I should place it in a section by itself next to *C. obscura*, p. 291; but it has no very close affinities to that species."

"Common in the interior of the island, on the hill-slopes and higher plains, where there are plenty of shrubs. The female is difficult to get. The male clings to the topmost branches, whence he gives out a very pretty note."—*I. B. B.*

A nest of this species is in the collection (see Plate XV.). It is sewn on to a small pendent branch, and has a lateral opening half-way up. It is composed of woolly pappus of plants and dry tendrils, and is of the form usually met with in this group of birds.

11. *PASSER INSULARIS*, sp. nov. (Plate XVI.)

Supra in fundo cinerascens maculis longitudinalibus nigris; fascia supraciliari postice dilatata dilute vulpino-rufa; regione parotica alba; oculo nigro circumdato; gula nigra; alæ tectricibus minoribus dilute rufis; remigibus tertiariis pallide rufescenti marginatis; remigibus primariis et rectricibus fuscis, his pallidius limbatis; subalaribus albido fuscoque variis; tergo, uropygio et supracaudalibus vix maculatis; subcaudalibus medio nigricantibus, late albido marginatis; subtus sordide et obsolete grisescens, nonnihil fulvescenti lavatus; gutture plus minus nigro-maculato; rostro nigro, pedibus fuscis. Long. tota 5·7, alæ 2·9, caudæ 2·4, tarsi 0·8. Fem. omnino obsoletius tincta; gula et regione malari ex isabellino albidis; alarum tectricibus obsolete fusco-rufescentibus; remigibus tertiariis sordide fulvescenti limbatis; subtus unicolor grisescens.

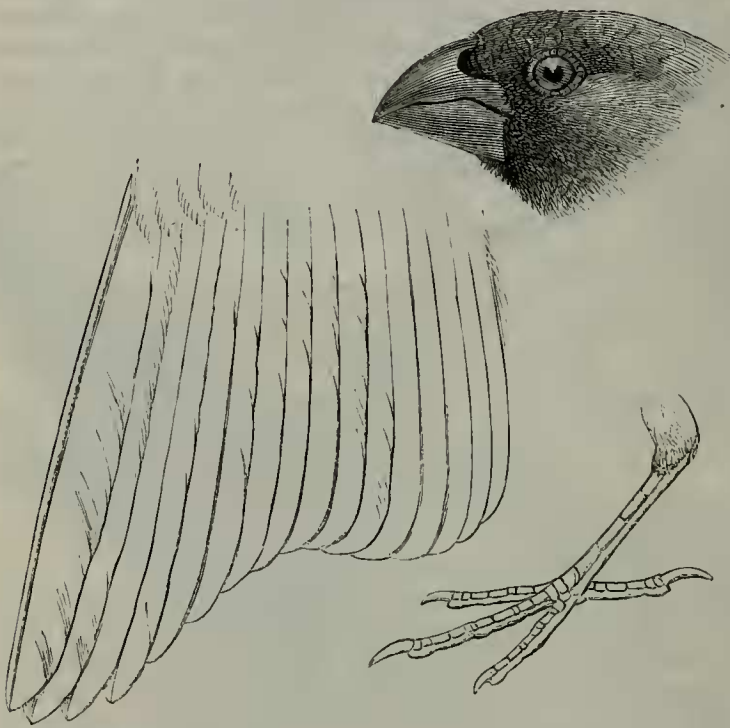
There are eight specimens in the collection of this true Sparrow, which apparently cannot be associated with any of the described species. It comes very near to *Passer motitensis*, but differs in wanting

the rufous colour of the interscapulum and rump, these parts being of a sordid brownish ashy-grey; the tail, rufescent in *P. motitensis*, is dark fuscous in the Socotran species; and there are other minor differences.

"Common all over the island. In Goahal valley I found them, along with the next species, on a Euphorbiaceous shrub of the genus *Croton*."—*I. B. B.*

12. *RHYNCHOSTRUTHUS SOCOTRANUS*, gen. et sp. nov. (Plate XVII.)

Fig. 2.



Head, wing, and right foot of *Rhynchostruthus socotranus*.

RHYNCHOSTRUTHUS, gen. nov., ex fam. *Fringillidarum*.

Char. gen. *Rostrum crassum, tumido-rotundatum, culmine distincto, tomis introrsum retractis, maxilla curvata, commissura curvata, gonyde conspicue adscendente; naribus in fossa basali positae, setis brevibus incumbentibus obtectis. Alæ longiusculæ, caudæ dimidium superantes, remigibus 1-3 cæteris longioribus, æqualibus, rem. 4to parum brevior. Cauda mediocris, æqualis. Pedes mediocres, satis debiles; digitus internus externo paulò brevior; ungues debiles.*

